

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1385
By Maggart

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Amy Hawkins for bravery and courage in protecting her children during a devastating tornado.

WHEREAS, the strength of our nation is based upon the strong bonds forged within our families and the sense of responsibility developed among family members; and

WHEREAS, the affection and concern of family members for one another has often been the basis for extraordinary acts of courage during times of adversity; and

WHEREAS, Amy Hawkins of Hendersonville, Tennessee, in exhibiting an unrivaled inner strength and selfless devotion to family in the face of tremendous peril, has become a true Tennessee hero; and

WHEREAS, the thirty-four-year-old mother of two was critically injured on April 7, 2006, when a Category 4 tornado bore down on her family's home in Hendersonville; in the words of her husband, Jerrod Hawkins, "What my wife did, she actually saved our family."; and

WHEREAS, Jerrod and Amy, onetime college sweethearts, grew up in Rockford, Illinois; Amy is a graduate of Guilford High School and a former phlebotomist at Rockford Memorial Hospital, and Jerrod graduated from Byron High School and is a former Byron, Illinois, firefighter; the Hawkinses have called Tennessee home for the past seven and one-half years; and

WHEREAS, Amy no longer remembers the day the tornado struck, so her husband, her family, and her friends have helped re-create the day for her; Amy and Jerrod were both tracking the severe weather that day; Jerrod was at work at the Brentwood Fire Department and Amy was standing on the deck of her Hendersonville home, and when Jerrod saw that the storms were heading towards his home, he called to warn Amy, who said, "I know it's here. Gotta go."; and

WHEREAS, Amy ushered her sons, six-year-old Jair and three-year-old Cole, into the basement and lay on top of her children to protect them from harm as the tornado passed; and

WHEREAS, much of the Hawkinses' home was blown more than a block away, and what did remain was found in the basement, including large pieces of an exterior brick wall;,which fell on top of Amy, fracturing her skull, crushing her ribs, and breaking her back, leaving her paralyzed from the waist down; and

WHEREAS, a neighbor was unable to find Amy, Jair, and Cole in the rubble at first, but then saw Cole's face in the corner of what had been the Hawkins' basement and found Amy, unconscious, with an arm wrapped around each boy, her body shielding them from the debris; and

WHEREAS, while the boys were not seriously injured, Amy was rushed to Vanderbilt University Medical Center's trauma unit, where she underwent back surgery on April 9; doctors discovered that Amy's T12 vertebra was smashed and the T8 was badly damaged, requiring the insertion of a foot-long-metal rod and several pins into her back; time and aggressive rehabilitation efforts will tell how will her injuries will heal; and

WHEREAS, Amy Hawkins was transferred to Shepherd Center, a catastrophic-care hospital in Atlanta, to begin an eight to twelve week stint of rehabilitation; concerning her treatments, her husband said, "Though she's in terrible pain, I've never heard her say a negative word...I know the therapy she's getting in Atlanta hurts her, but she keeps trying...She calls the boys every morning and every night."; and

WHEREAS, the boys and their father are temporarily living in a donated yellow farmhouse; Jerrod Hawkins tries to keep their sons' lives as routine as possible, taking Jair to baseball practice and Cole to soccer; Jerrod's mother helps him tend to the boys in between visits to see their mother, while Amy's mother is staying with her in Atlanta until Amy is able to return home to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Jerrod and Amy plan to rebuild their home; until then, the boys say their prayers with a picture of their mom between them, and Amy goes to sleep in much the same way, kissing her boys' pictures every night and dreaming of the day when she will once again run the bases with Jair and kick the soccer ball with Cole; "I want to walk," she says, "not for me

as much as I do for my two sons. I love those boys. I'm not a hero...I'm just my boys' mama."; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly join with Amy's family and many friends in expressing their great affection for her and deep appreciation of her selfless action in safeguarding the lives of her two children; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Amy Hawkins of Hendersonville for her unparalleled resolve, stalwart courage, and strength of character in protecting her children from a devastating tornado and wish her all the very best in the years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.